

Smartphone Usage and Psychological Well-being among Malaysian University Students

Yoke Yong Chen*, Azfar Safiy Bin Medi, Siti Sarah Ainur Iman Binti Muhammad Shamsudin, Kai De Ng, and Khairunnisha Binti Abdul Malek

Department of Psychological Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak, MALAYSIA.

Email: yychen@gmail.com

** Corresponding Author*

Abstract

Smartphone has become indispensable in individual daily life in which excessive use of smartphone might interfere with one's psychological well-being. Thus, it is crucial to understand how smartphones give impact on the psychological well-being especially among young people. The objective of present research was to investigate the smartphone usage among students in Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and its relation with psychological well-being. The present study was a cross-sectional study and there were 274 undergraduates from UNIMAS had been recruited, age ranged from 19 to 28 years old, with 28.5% males and 71.5% females. Smartphone usage questionnaire, Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults (SAQ-A30), Fear of Missing Out Scale (FOMOs), Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CESD), and Three-Item Loneliness Scale were used in the present study. The result showed that UNIMAS students spent approximately 8 hours ($SD = 4.26$) per day, on Instagram, followed by Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Wechat. Depressive scores were significantly associated with hours spent on smartphones daily. The result also showed that texting significantly associated with SAQ while social networking and gaming were significantly associated with FOMO scores. FOMO was mediating the hours spent on smartphone and depression scores. When the participants used their smartphone in a day was also mediated by FOMO contributing to their social anxiety scores. The results have practical implications for policymaker and advertisement that is more population targeted in promoting their products or deliver information.

Keywords: Smartphone, FOMO, Mediator, Social anxiety, Depression, Loneliness

Introduction

Smartphone that offers substantial variety of advanced features like a complete operating system (OS), web browsing, and software applications that enables the users to access social media, playing video games, stream videos, having online lectures and online meeting at anytime and anywhere (Alfawareh & Jusoh, 2017). Apart from entertainment and social media, the smartphone is also used for professionals such as business professionals for instant payment as smartphones provide mobile payment services through apps. For example, Sarawak Pay which allows users to make an instant payment using their smartphones (Bezovski, 2016). Smartphone has been used for contactless payments during Covid-19 to avoid direct contact with the virus through cash (Pantano, Pizzi, Scarpi & Dennis, 2020). Meanwhile, health professionals use smartphones as a communication tool in medical wards for its fast reaching to the respective physician, data imaging, and video procedures particularly for anatomical learning and video meeting with other professionals overseas (Wu et al., 2010; Trelease, 2008).